

## Legislative Updates

### Terrorist Surveillance Bill Stalled

I am [greatly concerned](#) by the refusal of the House leadership to allow a vote on a bipartisan measure to modernize the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978 (FISA). FISA prescribes the process for collecting intelligence on suspicious persons in the United States who may be acting against our nation on behalf of a foreign government. The original FISA is outdated, because it did not envision global technologies like the Internet that blur the line between foreign intelligence gathering and domestic surveillance.

In 2007, Congress passed a short-term law called the Protect America Act, a critical law updating FISA to allow our intelligence officials to track potential terrorists and keep us safe at home. However, the Protect America Act expired this month. Unfortunately, House leaders have refused to reauthorize it. Further, they are refusing to provide legal protections for patriotic U.S. companies that helped our nation's intelligence community after the September 11th terrorist attacks. These companies now face massive lawsuits. Without liability protections, I'm concerned they will no longer be willing to help in the war against radical jihadists.

The Director of National Intelligence, Admiral Mike McConnell, has explicitly warned that the failure of Congress to modernize FISA undermines our ability to collect intelligence on foreign terrorists. The Senate has already overwhelmingly passed legislation that would meet the needs of our intelligence community. With the stakes crystal clear, I believe the House should immediately take action to modernize FISA and keep America safe. [Share your thoughts](#)

### Economic Measure Becomes Law

As I [reported](#) last month, Congress and the President launched the new year by trying to develop a plan to give a boost to our uncertain economy. The legislative process unfolded in recent weeks, ultimately leading to compromise legislation that the President has signed into law. The law provides tax payments to 128 million Americans, and the checks should arrive in the mail in May or June. The amount of the payment varies based on an individual's level of income and marital status, as well as the number of children in the household. In addition, the

measure provided a tax incentive to encourage American businesses to expand in 2008, which in turn will free up money to retain and hire new workers and increase wages for current workers. For more information on the new law, click [here](#).

I supported the measure because it gave American taxpayers more of their money back and included important incentives for American employers to keep our economy growing. However, I am skeptical that providing one-time payments will "jump start" our economy by bolstering consumer spending, as some suggest. Historical evidence suggests that most Americans will either save the money or pay off debt, as opposed to spending the money to create an immediate boost for our economy. Thus, I believe Congress missed a great opportunity to pass meaningful tax reforms that would permanently reduce taxes on the American people and keep our economy growing over the long term.

In particular, I was disappointed that the new law didn't extend critical tax relief passed since 2001-across-the-board reductions in marginal rates, doubling the child tax credit to \$1,000, marriage penalty relief, and reductions in dividends and capital gains tax rates-that is set to expire in two short years. American employers are making decisions today based on their projected tax and business environment tomorrow. That is why it is critical that Congress provide certainty that the record tax hike scheduled to go in effect in 2011 will be avoided. I will continue to urge fellow legislators to provide this much-needed certainty without further delay.

[Share your thoughts](#)

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Pending Legislation and Issues Important to Northern CA

### **Berkeley Resolution Outrageous**

As you probably have heard, the Berkeley City Council recently declared that recruiters of the U.S. Marines in the city were "uninvited and unwelcome intruders." I believe this resolution reflected a stunning disregard for the millions of brave and selfless Americans serving in our armed forces who are devoting their lives to protecting our freedoms and keeping our nation secure. Regardless of how these city officials feel about current U.S. military operations, they should express appreciation for members of our armed forces rather than publicly calling for

their departure out of the city. As such, I believe their subsequent decision to partially backtrack from their original resolution was a step in the right direction.

I have co-sponsored [legislation](#) that would prevent federal earmarks from going to the city of Berkeley and redirect this funding to the U.S. Marines, and signed a [letter](#) to the President urging him to take similar action through an executive order. This action would send a clear message that local governments who feel it necessary to voice concerns about U.S. military operations should do so without insulting the men and women who are serving and sacrificing in these missions. Our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines certainly deserve this basic level of respect and gratitude.  
[Share your thoughts](#)

### **China Still Lacking on Darfur**

Despite repeated efforts by the United States and some in the international community, the horrific genocide in Darfur continues to persist. Hundreds of thousands of people, mostly innocent women and children, have been killed, and millions more have been displaced. The good news is that the United Nations last year authorized a large peacekeeping force that is designed to stop the violence. However, the Sudanese government is raising objections to the peacekeeping force and has continued its thinly-veiled support of the genocide.

As the Sudan's largest trading partner, China has a unique ability to pressure the Sudanese government to get serious about stopping the genocide. Unfortunately, their efforts have been, for the most part, lacking. Nine months ago, I joined over one hundred of my fellow legislators in [urging](#) China to exert its influence on the government. China responded by encouraging Sudan to accept the U.N. peacekeeping mission. But China can and must do much more. That is why I recently sent a follow-up [letter](#) that calls on China to stop being Sudan's "chief protector and apologist," and instead press upon the government to allow the full deployment of the UN force and uninhibited humanitarian activities, and to work toward a lasting political solution. These steps are essential to stopping the genocide in Darfur, and I will continue to monitor China's actions closely.

### **Northern CA Prunes Face Trade Barrier**

Our Northern California region supplies roughly half of the world's prunes. I recently sent a letter to the new Secretary of Agriculture, Ed Schafer, and Ambassador Susan Schwab, our United States Trade Representative, concerning market access for this commodity in Europe. The European Union has aggressively sought free trade agreements with other countries, and entered into an agreement with Chile in 2003 that eliminated the EU tariff on Chilean prune exports. Meanwhile, because the U.S. does not have a similar free trade agreement with the EU, we face a stiff 9.6 percent duty on our shipments of prunes into the European market. I will continue to work with the Administration to resolve this tariff disadvantage, and other EU subsidy issues in the context of the WTO's Doha Development Agenda negotiations.

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### **District News**

#### **Shasta Co. Gets Aid to Fight Drugs**

Many communities in the North State suffer from widespread drug trafficking and manufacturing. Mexican drug cartels have moved north along the I-5 corridor as the noose has tightened in other areas of California. Perhaps no county has suffered the consequences of this movement more than Shasta. A major drug eradication effort last year led to the elimination of nearly 300,000 marijuana plants in Shasta County forests, the majority from U.S. Forest Service land. This multi-agency effort demonstrated the seriousness of our region's drug problem.

With the support of local leaders, I [urged](#) the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) to bolster local law enforcement's counterdrug efforts by including Shasta County in the Central Valley California High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA). I'm pleased that ONDCP recently [approved](#) this request. As part of the Central Valley HIDTA, Shasta County will now have access to more federal resources-personnel, equipment and technology-in the effort to eliminate drug traffickers. With these resources, I believe we can deal local drug smugglers a severe blow.

[Read more](#)



### **Sutter Bypass Tour**

I recently had the opportunity to visit the Sutter Bypass to meet with local residents concerned with the management of the Sutter Wildlife Refuge, located in the bypass. As a third generation rancher from Sutter County, I have witnessed firsthand the devastation flooding can cause to our local communities and understand we have to be proactive in controlling flood waters. I was concerned to see the overgrowth of trees and vines in the bypass because the bypass system serves as an important safety valve during high water events, sometimes holding more water than our rivers. Overgrowth in this system threatens to prevent the free flow of water and puts additional pressure on our levees. Officials from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which manage the refuge, also participated in the tour. I believe we were able to make progress towards a solution to this problem.

### **Foreclosure Seminar Held**

The Yuba-Sutter Economic Development Corporation and the Sutter-Yuba Association of Realtors recently hosted a foreclosure roundtable to discuss the growing foreclosure rates in our local communities. I was pleased to be a part of this discussion and share information about the proactive steps the federal government has taken to address this problem.

For instance, last year the Department of Treasury and Housing and Urban Development came together and assembled a private-sector group called the HOPE NOW Alliance. HOPE NOW is a valuable resource for American homeowners. HOPE NOW is offering a free hotline which is available 24-hours a day to provide mortgage counseling and assist homeowners in working with lenders and avoiding foreclosure. I encourage anyone with questions or concerns about their mortgage to call 1-888-995-HOPE.



### **Visit with Boy Scouts**

On President's Day I had the privilege of meeting with 25 Boy Scouts from Chico to discuss civic responsibility and what it is like to be a member of Congress. The scouts had a number of interesting questions ranging from whether or not I have a limousine (I do not!), to what I thought about the presidential election and the candidates in the race. I appreciated their knowledge of current events and the opportunity to discuss important issues with them. As a former Boy Scout and Scoutmaster, I believe this organization is a tremendous asset in our communities and can make a real difference in the lives of young men across our nation.

### **Academy Nominees Announced**

I recently had the honor of nominating [twelve "Class of 2012" candidates](#) from Northern California to the U.S. Service Academies. These academies consist of the U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy, and U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. The nominees stood out academically and demonstrated an unmistakable call to serve. I applauded them for their commitment to keeping our nation free and secure. Having been nominated, the students must now compete with other nominees nationwide for an appointment to the academies. Academy officials will offer appointments this spring.